# Upper Nidderdale Primary Federation

# Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy

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| Policy: | Teaching and Learning |
| This Policy was approved: | November 2022 |
| This Policy was reviewed: | January 2025<br>July 2025<br>November 2025<br>July 2026 |
| Next Review: | September 2027 |
| Governor committee responsibility: | Full Governing Body |

**The fundamental goal of everyone that works in education is to improve students' lives. While many personal, family, and cultural factors contribute to students' outcomes, a large body of research indicates that what teachers do, know and believe matters more to the achievement of students than anything else we can influence. The quality of teaching is hugely important to the outcomes of young people, and great teaching can be learnt. Raising the quality of teaching within existing schools is probably the single most effective thing we could do to promote both overall attainment and equity (Wiliam, 2018).**

## Teacher Standards relevant to this policy

1) Set high expectations that inspire, motivate and challenge children.
2) Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils.
3) Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge
4) Plan and teach well-structured lessons.
5) Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils.
6) Make accurate and productive use of assessment.
7) Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment.

## Overview

At The Upper Nidderdale Primary Federation, it is our aim to develop a love of learning in our pupils by providing an ambitious and knowledge rich curriculum. We are committed to preparing our children to face the challenges of the modern world with confidence.

We aim to establish an environment where all children flourish and feel that they belong, irrespective of ability, race or gender.

We encourage the mental, physical and spiritual growth of the children and teach them how to keep safe on and offline.

**"Learning can be defined as an alteration in long-term memory. If nothing has altered in long-term memory, nothing has been learned."**

We recognise that all our pupils are at different stages of learning. Neuro-science emphasises the plasticity of the human brain. Our capacity to do or understand anything can improve. Good teaching, self-belief and deliberate practice are far more important than predisposition.

**Teaching and Learning and Inclusion – Inclusive Teaching**

Our High Quality Teaching approach means that "High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have, or may have SEN. additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching."
The SEND Code of Practice p99.

## Adaptive Teaching

**High-quality adaptive teaching is the skilful adjustment of teaching so that all pupils can access the full curriculum, with barriers removed through clear explanation, careful scaffolding, responsive questioning and appropriate support, whilst maintaining high expectations for every learner.**

1.We have high expectations for all and our curriculum remains ambitious. Pupils are not given easier work just because they need more support. **Teachers remove barriers rather than lower expectations**
2. **Responsive teaching** - Teachers use assessment, observation and feedback to spot what pupils do and do not understand/, Teaching is adapted in response to this information. Adjustments may happen:

- before the lesson
- during the lesson
- after the lesson

3. **Clear explanation and modelling** - Ideas are broken down carefully. Teachers model exactly what success looks like. Pupils are shown, not just told, how to complete tasks **(I do, we do, you do)**
4. **Scaffolding and gradual release** - Support is provided where needed, then gradually removed. This might include:

- sentence stems
- visuals
- worked examples
- prompts
- chunking tasks
- guided practice

**The aim is to build independence over time**
5. **Attention to cognitive load** - Content is presented clearly and in manageable steps. Teachers avoid overload by simplifying instructions, reducing clutter and revisiting key ideas. This helps pupils, especially those with SEND or working memory needs.
6**. Inclusive access -** Pupils may access learning in different ways, such as:

- oral responses
- practical tasks
- visual aids
- alternative recording methods
- assistive technology

The learning goal stays the same, but the route is adapted

## Why activate prior knowledge before teaching new content?

Activating prior knowledge helps pupils link new learning to what they already know, which makes the new content easier to understand, remember and use.

**Key reasons**

1. **It supports comprehension** - New ideas make more sense when pupils can connect them to familiar knowledge. This reduces confusion and helps pupils build understanding more securely
2. **It helps with memory** - Prior knowledge acts like a hook for new learning The brain stores new information more effectively when it is connected to existing schemas
3. **It exposes misconceptions** - Quick retrieval activities can show what pupils already think they know. Teachers can then correct misunderstandings before moving on
4. **It lowers cognitive load** - If pupils have the right background knowledge ready, they do not have to work as hard to make sense of the lesson
This is especially helpful for pupils with SEND, EAL or low prior attainment
5**. It improves participation** - Pupils are more confident when they start with something familiar. This can increase engagement and make it easier for them to contribute
6. **It creates a smoother sequence of learning** - Lessons feel joined up rather than isolated. Pupils are more likely to see the purpose of the new content and how it fits with previous learning.

**What it might look like in practice?**

- A short recap quiz
- Turn-and-talk
- Asking pupils what they remember from the last lesson
- Using a quick retrieval grid
- Reviewing key vocabulary or images
- Linking to a previous topic, text or experience

**Activating prior knowledge helps pupils connect new learning to what they already know, which improves understanding, reduces cognitive load and supports stronger long-term retention.**

**Knowledge**

We believe that it is vital that all staff are aware of the different types of knowledge that we teach pupils across the curriculum.

**Substantive Knowledge** is the content that teachers teach as established fact – whether common convention, concept or warranted account of reality. You might want pupils to know of crotchets, percentages, the Treaty of Versailles or Beethoven.
Substantive knowledge is the knowledge that teachers establish as fact' such as the subject knowledge lists we find in the national curriculum. When substantive knowledge connects to more substantive knowledge it creates understanding. Knowledge related to what you already know creates meaning (or misconceptions). Establishing prior knowledge is very important before introducing new ideas, as misconceptions can be actively diagnosed.

**Disciplinary Knowledge** is greater depth knowledge. It is knowing how knowledge was established, its degree of certainty and how it continues to be revised. It is also knowing how to use evidence or an argument within a particular subject. A knowledge rich curriculum is **normally associated** with

substantive knowledge; however, a high-quality curriculum ensures that pupils learn both the substantive knowledge required to connect prior learning with new, as well as disciplinary knowledge, which leads to pupils connecting learning between subjects.

**Substantive Knowledge → Factual accuracy, subject specific vocabulary**
**Disciplinary Knowledge → Wider interpretation and greater depth learning.**
When these two types of knowledge are taught, then we give pupils the means to understand what and how 'powerful knowledge' comes about; we make them critical thinkers and handlers of knowledge, rather than passive collectors of facts. 'In other words, we need to empower all children not only by ensuring they have a breadth of background knowledge in subjects, but also teach them how to be critical, questioning interpreters of that knowledge.

## Classroom Environments – (See Environment Poliocy for more details)

Our classrooms are attractive learning environments. We ensure that our displays reflect the topics being studied by the children and that children have the opportunity to display their best work. All classrooms have reading areas and they have a range of dictionaries and fiction, as well as non-fiction books. Our working walls relate to the current Maths and English topics, and are referred to during teaching so that we model to the children how to use them to enable them to work more independently.

We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning, and an exciting and well organised classroom promotes the independent use of resources and high quality work from the children.

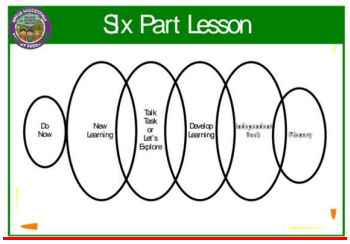
Classrooms are 'calm and orderly,' tidy and well organised to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils in a safe and predictable environment.

## Quality of Learning

We acknowledge that people learn in many different ways and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow ALL children to learn. The psychologist, Howard Gardner, identifies seven main areas of intelligence:

- Linguistic
- Logical/mathematical
- Visual/spatial
- Kinaesthetic
- Musical
- Interpersonal/group working
- Intrapersonal/reflective

## The Six Part Lesson




Through research into how children learn and what has the most impact on learning, we have developed our six part lesson approach.

1) Recall
2) Recap
3) I do – explicit modelling with thought processes spoken out loud
4) We do -
5) You do -
6) Plenary – What is the

The predictability of this approach supports all learners.

## Assessment for Learning

Assessment exists to help the teacher to help the child. It ensures more effective teaching by providing the evidence for personalising learning and the use of 'Pit Stops.' It assists the children by providing them with an indication of what stage they have reached in the learning process. It help to identify future planning and teaching strategies.

We use low stakes assessment, with regular recalls and quizzes used to further embed knowledge into the long-term memory.

## Knowledge Organisers:

Teachers will prepare 'Knowledge Organisers' to support long term knowledge acquisition. We will:

- Make explicit what students need to know automatically and be able to apply and develop.
- Base knowledge on cultural capital. Identify the knowledge a student should remember in ten years' time about that subject (sticky knowledge).
- Include specific Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary → Tier 1 is basic vocabulary, Tier 2 is high frequency/multiple meaning vocabulary and Tier 3 is subject specific vocabulary.

Design to make them mechanisms for retrieval practice, explicit vocabulary instruction and metacognitive learning in lessons and at home

## Supporting deeper knowledge acquisition - Essential Key Knowledge for staff to consider

## Working memory

This is where thinking actually happens. It has a very finite capacity; it can only hold and process about four different items at a time. If it receives too much it fails.

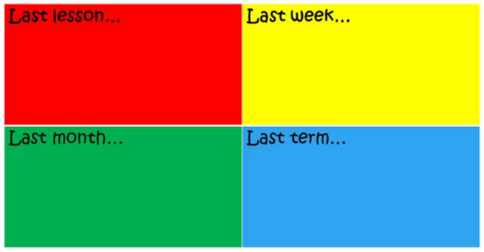
## Long-term memory

Long-term memory has huge – almost infinite – capacity. It is here that we store our knowledge of facts and procedures. The goal is to stock our long-term memories with knowledge in a well organised, easily retrievable way and make recall of key aspects automatic. This frees up the working memory for new information.

## Cognitive load

This is the term used in cognitive science to describe how much capacity something takes up in the working memory. Cognitive overload is what happens if too many demands are placed on working memory at once.

Each lesson begins with a recall of knowledge




"Our curriculum is designed to be a 'Knowledge Rich Curriculum' and our curriculum overview ensures that our pupils acquire a depth of knowledge in all areas of the curriculum, built up sequentially over time. We are determined that our pupils will know more and remember more over time. We have a cross-curricular topic approach, and, alongside this, we build in enriching and enlivening experiences which immerse the children in current and relevant themes. Our curriculum has the acquisition of knowledge at its heart, and we ensure that all pupils are supported throughout their learning to remember connected and essential knowledge as they progress through school."
Extract from our Intent

All subjects have a detailed intent, implantation and impact document. These documents set out the long-term planning for each subject from EYS to Year 6. This includes a cumulative and sequential long-term plan to ensure that pupils remember more over time. We have also established agreed end points for each year group in each subject. This means that we can ensure that pupils are ready for the next stage of their education.

## Cultural Capital

We believe that it is essential that we equip our pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital to succeed in life. We see this as essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.

**Through our curriculum we aim to:**

•Provide opportunities that encompass a wide range of purposeful learning experiences.
•Give pupils access to progressive, sequential learning that prevents episodic learning.
•Promote personalised learning that is reactive at the point of learning.
•Develop self-motivation, independence, positive attitudes, resilience and confidence.
•Provide consistency of approach to support all children, encouraging breadth and depth.
•Promote individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of others, democracy and rule of law.
•Diminish the difference**.**

## Activaiting Prior Knowledge

At the start of a teaching unit, pupils are taught connected content from previous learning. Prior vocabulary knowledge is also activated. This information is used to plan next steps. Some children with big gaps in their knowledge may need a session or two to pre-teach information that will enable them to access the whole class lessons. There may need to be some pre-teaching around tier 2 and 3 vocabulary that will be used in the sessions. This strategy is about ensuring that everyone can access the teaching and learning in a fair and equitable way. In the same way, if a pupil or group of pupils already has the basic, substantive knowledge about the subject, then there should be some personalized and more challenging sessions (including developing disciplinary knowledge) for these pupils. There is no way that every child's book should have identical work. Book looks should show that children have had a personalized approach to developing and strengthening their knowledge.

**Teachers will use information from recalls to plan next steps for various groups/pupils.**

We recognise the importance of revisiting previously learnt concepts. We do this to develop skills and embed knowledge. We ensure that our learners know why we do this and how it supports them to move forward in their learning. Retrieval practice is a strategy teachers can use to give pupils opportunities to have to try and remember things they have learnt previously; things they have begun to forget. Our retrieval quizzes and Learning Logs give children the opportunity to retrieve knowledge. All staff have had CPD about Rosenshine's 10 Principles and how to use these to retrieve previous knowledge. Teachers will use retrieval quizzes each Monday to retrieve knowledge from the previous week.

Retrieval practice is quite simply giving children tasks where they have to try and retrieve an answer from their long-term memory. Each time pupils try and do this, that memory will become a bit stronger and a bit easier to find next time. We use teaching time to address any gaps in knowledge, forgotten

knowledge or misconceptions. We make children aware of this vocabulary and whey we are teaching them something in particular so that they understand the learning process.
As Bjork (1975) puts it: "Retrieval is a powerful memory modifier."
We have drawn on cognitive science research to plan how to retrieve and recall previous knowledge. We know that using graphic displays to support the learning of new information and to make links with prior knowledge are effective because they can focus direct attention on elements of learning, avoiding confusion.
We use retrieval to cement the information in the long-term memory, which should enable that information to become easier to retrieve in the future. To ensure consistency and quality of retrieval, spaced practice is planned, as well as how this knowledge will be retrieved.
In the Upper Nidderdale Primary Federation, we use retrieval practice for th following reasons (based on cognitive research),

1. Retrieval practice aids later retention.
2. Retrieval low stakes tests identifies gaps in knowledge.
3. Retrieval produce better organisation of knowledge.
4. Retrieval improves the transfer of knowledge to new contexts – making links between new information and existing knowledge is a central aspect of learning.
5. Retrieval provides important feedback to teachers.
6. Regular retrieval improves metacognition skills and is motivational – pupils become trained in how to organise their knowledge internally, therefore organising new knowledge more automatically.

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| **Planned Recalls** | |
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| **Before a new unit is taught** | **Recall previous knowledge and connected knowledge – teachers will refer to intents and end points to establish how embedded previous knowledge is, gaps in knowledge and to establish misconceptions.** |
| **At the start of each lesson** | **Verbal recall of knowledge from the previous lesson, using information from the exit questions from the previous day to address group and whole class misconceptions.**<br><br>**Continual retrieval, through discussion and questioning allows for links and connections to be further developed.** |
| **Exit questions – at the end of each lesson,** | **To assess the depth of understanding and how pupils are beginning to use their growing knowledge to answer a variety of different style questions that will give them opportunity to retrieve information.**<br>• **True or false**<br>• **Multiple choice**<br>• **Fill in the missing word**<br>• **Match the statements.**<br><br>***Feedback from pupils will inform future planning and any intervention need to address gaps in learning or misconceptions.*** |

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| **At the end of the unit** | **Learning Logs**<br>**Children will use their substantive knowledge in a disciplinary way – they will do this by answering a 'big question' where they will choose the knowledge needed to answer the question and justify why they think this. These are unaided and so can be used to measure attainment against the end points for this subject.** |

## Metacognition

Metacognition is about developing children's awareness of how they learn best is as important as what they learn so as to grow confident and flexible learners. For this reason, metacognition is a central element of Teaching and Learning at the school.

Metacognition and self-regulation approaches aim to help pupils think about their own learning more explicitly, often by teaching them specific strategies for planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning. Interventions are usually designed to give pupils a repertoire of strategies to choose from and the skills to select the most suitable strategy for a given learning task.

Self-regulated learning can be broken into three essential components:

- cognition - the mental process involved in knowing, understanding, and learning;
- metacognition - often defined as 'learning to learn'; and
- Motivation - willingness to engage our metacognitive and cognitive skills.

## The Limitations of the working memory

We plan our curriculum so as not to overload the working memory. Teachers will support pupils to develop strategies to remember more over time. When we are taught something, the information our teacher is sharing passes first into our working memory. The working memory is the place where we think. What many teachers do not realise is that the capacity of the working memory is fixed and limited; as a result, it can only think about a very small number of things at a time. Once the working memory is full, it can only take on more information by 'dropping' something, in the same way that you might be able to juggle with two balls easily enough, but add a third into the mix and everything would go pear shaped. The technical term in cognitive science for 'going pear shaped' is *cognitive overload.*

## Develop the child's strategies for supporting memory

- Use of rehearsal to maintain important information.
- Teach strategies like mnemonics or acronyms to remember information.
- Teach the child how to use visualisation and imaging techniques to remember information.

- Encourage "talking aloud" where the child verbalises what they are doing as they complete a task.
- Teach the child how to make notes and lists to help remember information.
- Use of memory aids (e.g. numberlines, word cards etc.).
- Teach pupils how to mind map to help reduce WM overload.
- Encourage good self-organisation (e.g. use of daily time table, lists of items needed for various activities or classes, diaries, file dividers, schoolbags with sections to aid organisation of books and materials needed).

Pupils' working memory capacity is finite, and it should be reserved for new teaching, not cluttered processing things that should be remembered well enough that recall of them is automatic.

- When something can be recalled almost instantly, without any conscious thought, the knowledge has gained automaticity.
- The development of automaticity of skills generally reduces the load of the working memory by 90%.

## Deliberate Practice to develop automaticity

By breaking down a complex process such as adding fractions into separate, individual skills and then deliberately practising those until they are easy, cognitive overload is avoided.
Deliberate practice ensures that working memory can cope and so learning is transferred into the long-term memory. Many children are likely to struggle because they are being asked to think about too many things at once. This is particularly true of writing. Deliberate practice allows pupils time to practise small parts of a skill until it is so easy, it takes very little space in working memory.
Teachers should think of practice not as rote repetition, but as deliberate, goal-directed rehearsal paired with reflection on problem-solving processes. For example, when teachers have students practice identifying phonemes, the ultimate goal is for students to read with fluency and comprehension. Although fluent reading may be too complex a task for beginning readers to tackle, the more manageable task of identifying phonemes may scaffold students learning to achieve the ultimate goal of reading. That is, teachers should always design practice activities with the goal of transferring knowledge to new and more complex problems in mind.

"Deliberate practice (DP) occurs when an individual intentionally repeats an activity in order to improve performance. The claim of the DP framework is that such behaviour is necessary to achieve high levels of expert performance." (Campitelli & Gobet, 2011, p. 280).

## Questioning and Assessment

**"Skilful questioning is the beating heart of good pedagogy."**

Questions have been sequentially built into the sequence of learning that we have planned. These questions can be used in several ways:

1) **Progressively –** Questions can be asked at the start of a unit – this will show gaps in learning and help staff plan for a more personalised learning path. Pupils then refer, edit and amend their answers as they progress through each stage of the teaching sequence (metacognition).
2) **Cumulatively -** questions can used at the start and end of lessons to support pupils with retrieving and applying taught content. Question sets increase in size as lessons progress.

We use low stake quizzes to improve memory. Quizzing is primarily a learning strategy to improve retrieval practice – the bringing of information to mind. It is commonly misunderstood and thought of only as an assessment strategy.

## Personalised learning and Differentiation

We believe that high quality teaching is the right of every child. We also believe that inclusive education means providing all pupils with appropriate education and support alongside their peers. We foster and nurture our pupils' long term memory through the use of recaps, **repetitions and revisits. We also** plan opportunities in all subjects for children to think in different ways; find different solutions; make links and connections between subjects and information. By presenting concepts and key knowledge in a variety of ways. This approach has been developed to meet the needs of all groups of children in school, including disadvantaged and SEND. We are determined to provide an environment in which ALL children can flourish.

## The role of Subject Leaders

Subject Leaders are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of their subject. This involves a variety of monitoring strategies (as stated in our Subject leader handbook) such as lesson observations, pupil conferencing, monitoring books etc. These actions are timetabled throughout the year, with an annual 'Deep Dive' being the focal point for action during the academic year.

## The role of governors

Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school policies on teaching and learning. In particular they;

- Ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning.
- Monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations.
- Monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment.
- Ensure staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching.
- Monitor effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning policy through school self-review processes. These include subject leader and headteacher reports to governors, as well as training sessions attended by our staff.

## Agreed pedagogy for ensuring that children remember more over time.

No one style of teaching is expected, however, in every lesson taught we would expect the approach to be consistent and for our shared principles to be clear in all lessons.

We want children to learn more, remember more and as a result be able to do more.

Our ultimate goal is that essential knowledge in all subjects will be retained in pupils' long-term memory.

1) Start with knowledge – Using agreed knowledge recaps grids. This should always create a discussion with examples etc.
2) Take opportunities to identify gaps in knowledge – personalized learning where appropriate. Use the start of a unit of work to check knowledge fn understanding – Is previous knowledge secure? Is the pupil ready to add new and connected knowledge?
3) Build knowledge systematically - do not overload working memory – use classroom prompts and supports to lessen the stress on working memory.
4) Low stakes quizzes are used to aid knowledge retention.
5) Lessons will be dynamic an inclusive. Ensure that ALL children access the curriculum – SEND children working alongside their peers, with appropriate support and provision in place or at a different pace.
6) Provide regular planned deliberate practice to develop fluency without overloading pupils' working memory
7) Consider what you have in place to support children to remember knowledge and to ensure that pupils are able to draw on retained knowledge – consider use of deliberate practice.
8) Do not move on too quickly. Speed of delivery can then become a barrier to learning. It can widen the gap for disadvantaged pupils.
9) The focus of lessons needs to be supporting pupils to remember more, not just imparting knowledge.
10) CHAMPS learning behavior MUST be demonstrated as well as reference to the 'Growth Mindset' characters for challenge and resilience.